

Please submit for the record for the
Human Services Committee
Hearing of March 11, 2010

Diana Appleton
33 Mechanic Street #211
Windsor, CT 06095

February 18, 2010

Re: DDS attendance-based reimbursement is unworkable for people with
intellectual disability and private providers.

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Diana Appleton and I am the mother of a wonderful young woman, Saarin Appleton, who has intellectual disability and is a client of HARC, Inc. for her day program and her residential program. I also work at HARC as Director of Communications.

Saarin, who is 32, attends her day program five days a week from approximately 10:00 to 3:00, Monday through Friday.

I am very deeply concerned about the ability of HARC (and other private providers) to continue providing these essential programs and services to its participants, like my daughter, and the many others who need these supports, in the face of the extensive budget cuts and absence of a COLA in recent years. Resources have been strained to the breaking point because of these, and now with the implementation of the 90% attendance reimbursement program, I fear that we are making business impossible for private providers. We are also endangering the lives of our sons, daughters and loved ones who need the supports and infrastructure that HARC and other private providers have struggled to develop and refine over many years.

While Saarin's attendance is luckily above 90%, many other participants have attendance which is lower, due to fragile health, doctor and therapy appointments. When any of these participants are absent from their day programs, the staff who would be supporting them, are reassigned to other participants and duties. Program resources and employee time are used efficiently to maintain the infrastructure that is so critically needed by all our participants, and to do business as economically as possible.

Thanks to HARC, my daughter is a happy and engaged young woman who has a life, who lives in her community, and who has the knowledge that she is a part of her community. She adores her staff, and being part of HARC and the working community. She loves the fact that people in the community know her and that when we go out, she will see someone she knows - and they will wave to her or say "Hi Saarin!"

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Like the rest of us who are pitching in to weather the economic crisis, she and other HARC participants are shouldering their share. Their work hours have been cut back to spread the available supported employment sights to as many participants as possible. Saarin is impacted directly because she cannot afford to go to summer camp for as long as she would like - having made less money throughout the year.

Please don't ask her and the other fragile people served by HARC to do without everything that gives their life meaning. It is our responsibility and duty to protect and nurture the spirits and souls of these individuals who depend on us. Please don't destroy our ability to do that, by destroying the private providers like HARC. Thaks you.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Appleton